

MONTANA CROP PROGRESS



United States Department of Agriculture
NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE
MONTANA FIELD OFFICE
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 Cooperating with the Montana Department of Agriculture



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CROP PROGRESS AND CONDITION MONTH OF JANUARY 2023

AGRICULTURAL SUMMARY: The State of Montana experienced a warm January, with varying precipitation totals according to the Mountain Regional Field Office of the National Agricultural Statistics Service, USDA. Temperatures for the month of January ranged from average to six degrees above average for most areas in the State. Isolated areas in the central and eastern portions of the State experienced average daily temperatures 8 to 10 degrees above average. Along the northern border and eastern half of the State, precipitation for January was scarce with monthly precipitation totals less than half an inch. The southern border and western portion of the State fared a little better with January precipitation totals ranging from half an inch to over 2 inches. Drought conditions slightly improved in areas experiencing moderate, severe, and extreme drought; however, overall drought conditions have worsened due to minimal precipitation and warm temperatures. According to the U.S. Drought Monitor published on January 26, 2023, 95.2 percent of the State is experiencing drought conditions, compared with 87.9 percent at the end of December. The amount of land rated as abnormally dry increased 7.3 percentage points from 28.0 percent at the end of December to 35.3 percent for the month of January. Moderate drought was present across 22.9 percent of the State, down slightly from 24.8 percent at the end of December. Severe drought covered 26.2 percent of the State, up from last month's 23.0 percent, and extreme drought was found in 10.8 percent of the State, down from last month's 12.2 percent. Snow Water Equivalent (SWE) totals for the State's basins dropped during the month of January. Of the 13 basins, 5 of them remain above average. These basins have SWE totals ranging from 123 percent of normal in the Madison Basin to 104 percent of normal in the Helena Valley Basin. The remaining basins have SWE totals below average, with the lowest being the Kootenai Basin with an SWE of 78 percent of normal.

In Valley County, there were continued reports of very little winter wheat planted due to dry conditions. Mineral, Missoula, and Ravalli Counties reported unseasonably warm temperatures for most of January; however, a winter storm has impacted the counties at the end of January. Temperatures with the storm were below zero and the few operations who are calving, lambing, or kidding were concerned about the cold temperatures stressing mothers and newborn livestock. Topsoil moisture conditions were reported as 10 percent very short, 41 percent short, 45 percent adequate, and 4 percent surplus, compared with 19 percent very short, 27 percent short, 53 percent adequate, and 1 percent surplus on the previous report. Subsoil moisture conditions were reported as 8 percent very short, 56 percent short, 33 percent adequate, and 3 percent surplus, compared with 27 percent very short, 40 percent short, 32 percent adequate, and 1 percent surplus on the previous report. Snow cover was rated 33 percent good to excellent. Winter wheat was rated 1 percent very poor, 1 percent poor, 82 percent fair, 15 percent good, and 1 percent excellent. Pasture and range conditions improved slightly from the previous report with 16 percent rated very poor, compared with 24 percent rated very poor at the end of December. An estimated 99 percent of cattle and calves were receiving supplemental feed and an estimated 98 percent of sheep and lambs were receiving supplemental feed. A few operations have begun calving and lambing, with an estimated 4 percent of calving and 2 percent lambing completed, compared with 1 percent for both calving and lambing completed this time last year.

Note: Monthly reports will be released for February on February 27, 2023; and for March on March 27, 2023.

LIVESTOCK PROGRESS

Commodity	Current report (percent)	Previous report (percent)	Previous year (percent)	5-year average (percent)
Cattle and calves				
Cows Calved.....	4	NA	1	NA
Receiving supplemental feed.....	99	95	96	NA
Sheep and lambs				
Ewes lambled.....	2	NA	1	
Receiving supplemental feed.....	98	88	100	NA

NA – not available

(--) – zero

SOIL MOISTURE CONDITION

	Current report	Previous report	Previous year	5-year average
	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)
Topsoil moisture				
Very short.....	10	19	55	NA
Short.....	41	27	30	NA
Adequate.....	45	53	14	NA
Surplus.....	4	1	1	NA
Subsoil moisture				
Very short.....	8	27	60	NA
Short.....	56	40	25	NA
Adequate.....	33	32	15	NA
Surplus.....	3	1	--	NA

NA – not available

(--) – zero

CROP, LIVESTOCK, PASTURE AND RANGE CONDITION

Commodity	Current report	Previous report	Previous year	5-year average
	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)
Grazing accessibility				
Open.....	30	23	51	NA
Difficult.....	32	37	24	NA
Closed.....	38	40	25	NA
Pasture and range				
Very poor.....	16	24	68	NA
Poor.....	31	17	25	NA
Fair.....	28	28	6	NA
Good.....	24	30	1	NA
Excellent.....	1	1	--	NA
Winter wheat				
Very poor.....	1	1	19	NA
Poor.....	1	10	46	NA
Fair.....	82	67	21	NA
Good.....	15	16	14	NA
Excellent.....	1	6	--	NA
Winter wheat – wind damage				
None.....	74	82	76	NA
Light.....	12	13	17	NA
Moderate.....	10	4	6	NA
Severe.....	4	1	1	NA
Winter wheat – freeze and drought damage				
None.....	74	77	64	NA
Light.....	20	22	20	NA
Moderate.....	6	1	14	NA
Severe.....	--	--	2	NA
Winter wheat – protectiveness of snow cover				
Very poor.....	9	1	7	NA
Poor.....	40	36	48	NA
Fair.....	18	25	35	NA
Good.....	18	14	9	NA
Excellent.....	15	24	1	NA

NA – not available

(--) – zero